

S-499

John T. Handy Company  
Crisfield  
Private

1906 and later

The John T. Handy Company, established in 1894 and relocated to Crisfield in 1903, is the oldest, continuously operated seafood business in Somerset County. The site of the seafood processing facility in the Hoptown neighborhood of Crisfield is defined by a range of buildings dating from c. 1906 through the mid twentieth century. The two single-story common bond brick warehouse type structures survive as some of the oldest seafood related buildings in the city and retain portions of original brickwork with double rowlock segmental arched door and window openings. The company complex, fronting the Annemessex River on two sides, is located on oyster shell filled land, which reflects the integral relationship this business and its structures has with this waterfront site.

John Thomas Handy, born in 1876, was the son of Joseph Thomas Handy, an oyster packer and storekeeper on East Creek near the village of Marion. John T. Handy established an oyster packing company in Jack's Hammock at the mouth of the Pocomoke River on Pocomoke Sound in 1894 and after a few years a tomato canning factory was begun in Shelltown. He relocated to Crisfield in 1903 and opened a larger oyster operation in a frame building at the foot of Main Street. He took as partners, Joseph C. Sterling and his brothers Wilson "Bake" Loren and Arlie G. Sterling. Two of Arlie Sterling's sons, Stanley and Joseph Sterling and John T. Handy, Jr. continued to operate the company after the deaths of their fathers. The company packed oysters, crabs, fish, vegetables and fruit under the brand names, "Star" and "Handy's."

The original building at the foot of Main Street burned and was replaced in 1912 by two-story brick structure. The company purchased property in the "Hoptown" section of Crisfield (named for an Italian man called Hop Peanut). Over the years a complex of buildings was developed for processing seafood as well as vegetables and various fruits. A modern

building was constructed during World War II with the help of German prisoners of war stationed at a Westover labor camp. The first part was built in 1940 and the second section followed in 1944.

The Handy family retained ownership of the business until 1981 when it was sold to Terrence Conway. He hired Carol Haltaman, public relations director for Perdue, to help find new markets for soft-shell crabs. The company expanded its operations world-wide, selling soft-shell crabs to Asia and Europe. The entire plant was upgraded with the newest in processing equipment.

Under its new ownership, the Handy Company was instrumental in helping to open up a national and international market for soft-shell crabs at a time when the Chesapeake Bay was the major producer of soft crabs in the world. With a growing demand for the product and growing pressures on the mid-Atlantic crab fishery, the company is now importing soft crabs from Thailand, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, and Mexico. Imported crabs are marketed under the brand name "Paradise Blue" to differentiate them from the Chesapeake Bay crabs marketed under the "Handy" brand.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. S-499

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic John T. Handy Company  
other \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street and number 7<sup>th</sup> Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication  
city, town Crisfield \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity  
county Somerset \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name John T. Handy Company c/o Terrence Conway and Carol Haltaman  
street and number P. O. Box 309 telephone 410-968-1663  
city, town Crisfield state Maryland zip code 21817

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset County Clerk of Court liber ITP 351 folio 50  
city, town Princess Anne tax map 102 tax parcel 121 tax ID number 7-114192

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- \_\_\_\_ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
\_\_\_\_ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
\_\_\_\_ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
\_\_\_\_ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
\_\_\_\_ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
\_\_\_\_ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	<u>6</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<u>6</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
				Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	
				_____	

## 7. Description

Inventory No. S-499

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The John T. Handy Company, simply known as Handy Seafood Company, operates at a complex of masonry and frame structures situated on the south side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and to the west of MD Route 413 in the "Hoptown" section of Crisfield, Somerset County, Maryland. The complex is bounded by the Little Annemessex River on the south and west.

This seafood packing complex includes structures dating from c. 1906 and as recent as the 1980s. The oldest structures in the complex are two single-story, rectangular, common bond brick shucking houses on the west side of the property and adjacent to the Little Annemessex River. The southern of the two structures is a twenty (20) bay by seven (7) bay, eight-course common bond brick building initially erected as an oyster shucking house, and used over the past century for host of other purposes. The common bond brick structure was modified with a rebuilt roof and altered window and door openings during the mid to late twentieth century. The northeast side is a twenty-bay façade with alternating door and window openings piercing the common bond brickwork. Both door and window openings are spanned by double rowlock segmental brick arches. Many of the openings have been infilled with brick or concrete block. The southeast gable end of the old shucking house retains several segmental arched openings, four of which have been infilled with later brick. The top of the gable end has been reworked with mid twentieth century brick, and the edge of the roof has a slightly extended eave with an open soffit. The medium pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The northwest gable end is completely rebuilt in concrete block with a T-111 sheathed gable end. The interior has a concrete floor and an exposed series of sandwiched trusses that span the building from side to side. Through purlins rest atop the trusses to support the board nailers. The interior space has been refitted with modern shelving for storage.

Standing north of the c. 1906 shucking house is a second rectangular common bond brick shucking house twenty-five (25) bays across by seven (7) bays deep which has been converted for storage. The common bond brick structure is covered by a medium pitched gable roof of asphalt shingles. The exterior has exposed seven-course common bond walls on the nine (9) eastern bays, where door and window openings have been closed up. One double rowlock segmental arch survives in the series of openings. The brickwork is stuccoed over on the remaining sixteen (16) bays. Star shaped tie rod anchors are afixed to the exterior in several places. The interior has a concrete floor, and paired trusses support the roof.

Located east of the former oyster shucking houses is the main processing plant and office of the Handy Company. The double gable, seven-course common bond brick plant was erected during the early to mid 1940s, and it has been extended to the north, south, and west by several concrete block additions. The southeast front is defined by an M-shaped roof, and the top surface is covered with asphalt shingles. The edge of the roof has a slightly extended eave with open soffits. Piercing the upper gable ends are small louvered vents. Extending forward of the double gables is a low pitched

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shed roofed extension that incorporates an enclosed brick section that houses the company offices. Directly adjacent is an open porch that shelters the main double door entrance into the processing plant.

The interior of the plant consists of two large rooms incorporated under the double gable roof. Entrance through the double doors provides access to a wide passage flanked by offices on the north and a small cooler that doubles as a breakroom is located to the south. The floor throughout the building is concrete with built-in floor drains, and the ceiling is covered with thin board sheets.

Located off the main processing room on the south side is a picking room using ultra-violet light to highlight the remaining shell in the crabmeat. The main processing room on the north side contains the nitrogen gas freezing equipment, and located off the north room is a small freezer.

The other main building in the complex is a large seven-course common bond brick warehouse type structure called the freezer building where bulk storage is housed. The rectangular freezer building is ten (10) bays across with plain brick pilasters defining each bay. The building rests on a poured concrete floor, and the medium pitched gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The edge of the roof is finished with a slightly extended eave with open soffits. The sides of the building are pierced by an assortment of modern windows and freight doors.

Standing along the waterfront and on the south side of the property is a series of open framework, gable roofed structures housing double tiers of peeler tanks for soft crabs. The peeler tank facility on the southwest corner of the property incorporates the former trusses salvaged from the old freight warehouse located at the main dock in Crisfield. The roof frame, composed of a series of sandwiched trusses with diagonal braces, rests atop creosote posts.

The Handy Company complex also includes a two-story, stuccoed brick warehouse that stands on the southwest corner of Main Street and Hearn Street. The rectangular brick structure is defined by an asymmetrical fenestration with a variety of sash windows marking each elevation. The top edge of the wall has a stepped parapet disguising a long shed roof that runs north to south.

## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates 1894

Architect/Builder

Construction dates 1906

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The John T. Handy Company, established in 1894 and relocated to Crisfield in 1903, is the oldest, continuously operated seafood business in Somerset County. The site of the seafood processing facility in the Hoptown neighborhood of Crisfield is defined by a range of buildings dating from c. 1906 through the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The two single-story common bond brick warehouse type structures survive as some of the oldest seafood related buildings in the city and retain portions of original brickwork with double-rowlock segmental arched door and window openings. The company complex, fronting the Annemessex River on two sides, is located on oyster shell filled land, which reflects the integral relationship this business and its structures has with this waterfront site.

### HISTORY AND SUPPORT

John Thomas Handy, born in 1876, was the son of Joseph Thomas John Handy, an oyster packer and storekeeper on East Creek near the village of Marion. John T. Handy established an oyster packing company in Jack's Hammock at the mouth of the Pocomoke River on Pocomoke Sound in 1894 and after a few years a tomato canning factory was begun in Shelltown. He relocated to Crisfield in 1903 and opened a larger oyster operation in a frame building at the foot of Main Street. He took as partners, Joseph C. Sterling and his brothers Wilson "Bake," Loren, and Arlie G. Sterling. Two of Arlie Sterling's sons, Stanley and Joseph Sterling and John T. Handy, Jr. continued the company after the deaths of their fathers. The company packed oysters, crabs, fish, vegetables and fruit under the brand names, "Star" and "Handy's."

The original building at the foot of Main Street burned and was replaced in 1912 by a two-story brick structure which was being used in 1977 for processing and shipping soft-shell crabs. In addition to shucking oysters in 1912, the company purchased fresh fish such as shad and croakers from all around the bay from "run-boats," and in Kilmarnock, Virginia, and packed them for reshipment by railroad to city markets.

By 1917, the company had purchased property in the "Hoptown" section of Crisfield (named for an Italian man called Hop Peanut) and erected several large brick buildings for its oyster and canning operations. Here the company shucked oysters, packed green-wrapped tomatoes (the first to do so in this

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area), canned peaches, pears, sweet potatoes, herring, herring roe, whiting and tomatoes. They also bought and sold strawberries in late spring, and processed soft-shell crabs.<sup>1</sup> John T. Handy, Jr. joined the company full-time when he graduated from business school at Lehigh University in 1938. He spent five years in the army as an engineer during World War II, returning to Crisfield and the family business in the late 1940s. A modern building was constructed during World War II with the help of German prisoners of war stationed at Westover. The first part was erected in 1940 and the second half followed in 1944.<sup>2</sup>

In the late 1930s and 1940s, the seafood workers in Crisfield successfully organized and formed Seafood Workers Local #453 of the Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workman AFL union. John T. Handy Company workers were part of this movement. In 1942, The United Oysterman's Union 19600 of the CIO negotiated an employment agreement.<sup>3</sup> The year after, in 1943, Handy employee William Sterling was selected as a shop steward of the new Local #453.<sup>4</sup> In 1944, the union representing Handy's employees requested a raise of 10 cents per cup for shucking oysters, an increase to 60 cents per hour. Dealers in Baltimore at this time were paying 50 cents an hour. Negotiations deadlocked on a renewed contract on wages and the issue of a closed shop. A majority of the Crisfield packers agreed to the wage increase for the shuckers and packing-room help.<sup>5</sup>

In December 1944, another dispute between 27 oyster packing companies and Crisfield and Seafood Workers Union Local 453 threatened a strike. The employees were accused of trying to increase the size of the measuring cup used for shucked oysters in compliance with a directive of the Department of Tidewater Fisheries of the State of Maryland. Early in December 1944, all of the employers were arrested and convicted of violations of Article 72, Section 90, of the Maryland Code, which allegedly required the use of a 9 pint measuring cup, and all the cases were appealed. The employers were paying 60 cents for an 8 pint cup and were willing to pay 67 ½ cents for a 9 pint cup, but the Union would not agree to the use of a 9 pint cup, contending that the Maryland law was optional and not mandatory.<sup>6</sup> The Seafood Union won an election in Crisfield in 1948 that authorized the establishment of a Union shop in the seafood plants with union contracts. At the John T. Handy Company, 39 employees voted in favor of the Union with two people voting against.<sup>7</sup>

In 1951, as the company's freezing operations began to expand, a large freezing plant was assembled at

<sup>1</sup> Woodrow T. Wilson, *Crisfield, Maryland 1676-1976*, Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1977, p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> Conversation with John T. Handy, Jr. Crisfield, Maryland, December 10, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> U. S. Department of Labor, United States Conciliation Service.

<sup>4</sup> *The Butcher Workman*, December 1943, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> U. S. Department of Labor, United States Conciliation Service, Office of Regional Supervisor, Baltimore, Maryland, September 5, 1944, Case No. 422-2230, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>6</sup> U. S. Department of Labor, United States Conciliation Service, Office of Regional Supervisor, Baltimore, Maryland, December 20, 1944, File No. 442-3312, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>7</sup> *The Butcher Workman*, May 1948, p. 6.

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the 'Hoptown' facility. The company employed as many as 400 people in the canning, processing, and freezing operations. Canned goods were shipped by rail, largely to New England, as well as by independent truckers. Philadelphia was a major market for soft crabs and fish. In 1957, John T. Handy, Jr. served as chairman for the Tri-State Packers Association's Commodity Committee on Seafood.<sup>8</sup>

By 1961, frozen foods had become more important than canned foods and the agriculture industry began to change on the Eastern Shore. Red Steel disease during the 1940s hurt the strawberry business. Labor shortages and labor costs drove the change from vegetable and fruit farming to chickens, corn, and soybeans. The Handy Company closed its tomato canning operations and the freezing plant to focus on soft-shell crabs plus a small amount of oyster production.

This was the first company in Crisfield to have indoor shedding tanks for peeler crabs. Before this innovation, watermen and processors had used open floats 'overboard' in the harbor. These had to be tended by skiff and could be difficult and dangerous during the night or in bad weather. In addition, they were open to the depredations of sea gulls and turtles who helped themselves to the crabs. The floats also had to be pulled out to repair and dry periodically. Handy built tanks on the concrete floor of the old tomato packing building that could be tended by workers with boots and a net. These ten tanks could handle 30,000 crabs and could deliver about 300 dozen soft crabs a day. Most of the crabs were supplied to the company by independent watermen who could lease space in Handy shedding buildings, and the facilities included a freezing operation capable of freezing 3,000 dozen soft crabs a day. Cold storage facilities could hold to 30,000 dozen soft crabs frozen in institutional and retail packages. The company sold its products nationally with brokers in California and Florida and a distributor in New Orleans.

The company continued to experiment with seafood processing and packaging, producing a retail package of frozen Sea Squab in 1964, said to be an industry 'first.' Unfortunately, the abundance of sea squab only lasted for a year in the Chesapeake Bay, and this product was abandoned. Other products included fresh and frozen crabs, fresh and frozen shucked oysters, and an institutional pack of frozen shad roe. They were also shipping live terrapin. John T. Handy, Jr. headed up the firm's oyster packing and planting operations while Stanley C. Sterling supervised the crab operations and his brother Joseph C. Sterling was in charge of accounting operations. Company operations were housed in two separate waterfront locations.<sup>9</sup>

In 1965, John T. Handy, Jr. and Stanley C. Sterling were partners in the company, employing 51 people processing frozen soft crabs and oysters.<sup>10</sup> In 1977, John T. Handy III was working for the company. The company sold most of its product to local seafood distributors in the 1970s. Philadelphia was the principal market, with some business in New York. They employed about 50 (28 men and 23 women) people in 1977

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<sup>8</sup> 1957 *Directory of Food Processors*, Vol. 17, No. 9, May 1957, Tri-State Packers' Association, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> "Something Old...Something New," *Fishing Gazette*, October 1964, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> *Directory of Maryland Manufacturers 1965-1966*, Maryland Department of Economic Development, p. 234.

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processing fresh and frozen soft crabs and oysters.<sup>11</sup> The company had an oyster shell plant that was phased out due to a scarcity of oysters and labor. Crab waste was sent to a fertilizer plant at Hopewell. They continued to have an active fresh fish business, and canned herring under the 'Handy' brand. The oyster operation was discontinued in 1978.

Terrence Conway purchased the company from the Handy family in 1981 and in 1984 moved the plant from the waterfront on Main Street to the Hoptown location on 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The Hoptown facility was much larger than the old Main Street location. He hired Carol Haltaman, public relations director for Perdue, to help find new markets for soft-shell crabs. The company expanded its operations world-wide, selling soft-shell crabs to Asia and Europe. A new crab processing facility was opened in April 1984 when the company adopted a new process to quick-freeze soft crabs individually, a process that took 32 minutes compared with the old way of freezing bulk for 18 hours. The new plant housed electronic grading machines, crab processing machinery, a double blast freezer and offices. The shelf life for frozen soft shells is 18 months while live soft shells can last about two days. The company flew live crabs daily from BWI to seafood distributors in California, Maine, Chicago, and Dallas. In 1983, Handy shipped 400,000 dozen live and frozen soft-shell crabs, a record production for the entire industry. The company employed a seasonal workforce of 70 people.<sup>12</sup> Foreign markets accounted for about 30 percent of Handy's approximately \$6 million in sales, and the company flew flags of the 22 countries in front of the plant in honor of its growing list of customers.<sup>13</sup>

The company was the first to be federally inspected in 1984, and Handy was named small business exporter of the year by the U. S. Small Business Administration in 1986. The company employed up to 210 seasonal workers, mostly women. Sales reached \$7 million in 1987 with most of its exports going to Japan. Shipments of crabs packaged live at noon in Crisfield were trucked to Kennedy Airport in New York where they were flown overnight to Tokyo. The crabs arrived in Japan about 12 hours later and were served fresh that day in restaurants.<sup>14</sup> This lasted only about two years as air freight charges proved too expensive.

In 1987, the company introduced several new products, including soft shell crawfish, crab cakes and fresh and frozen crab meat. Soft shell crawfish were harvested in ponds in Louisiana, with a season that extends from December to July, nearly opposite the May to October season of the soft-shell crab.<sup>15</sup> A processing plant was opened in Baton Rouge, Louisiana for the new delicacy, but the crawfish business only lasted three

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<sup>11</sup> *Directory of Maryland Manufacturers 1977-1978*, Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development, p. 221.

<sup>12</sup> *Directory of Maryland Manufacturers 1983-1984*, Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development, p. 294.

<sup>13</sup> Melanie Pullen, *Baltimore News American*, August 12, 1984, p. 1A.

<sup>14</sup> Mary Beth Regan, "Selling Softshells: Md. Company Expands Overseas Market For The Delicacy," *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1987, Washington Business, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Jensen, "Shore Plant Rides Crest Of Soft-Shell Sales," *Baltimore Sun*, June 21, 1987, p. 1B.

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years as it proved too expensive to moult crawfish at a reasonable cost to the consumer.<sup>16</sup>

In February 1988, the company was purchased by Taiyo Oil Co., Ltd. of Tokyo, Japan, that already owned a seafood processing facility in Japan. Terry Conway was retained as a consultant and Carol Haltaman remained as president of the company.<sup>17</sup> The company continued to expand, purchasing land and a building near Port Norris, New Jersey, on the Maurice River, where they set up 400 crab shedding floats. Most of the crabs were sent to Crisfield for processing. The light harvest in the Chesapeake Bay in 1987 coupled with a higher demand for the product forced the company to seek crabs outside the bay area. Overseeing the New Jersey operation was former Crisfield waterman Jeff Tawes. This expansion was financed with funds from a \$1 million Industrial Revenue Bond, approved by the Somerset County Commissioners. The company also used the funds to build an addition to the processing plant and add 200 crab floats in Crisfield.<sup>18</sup> In 1989, the company introduced chilled dressed soft-shell crabs to the retail market.

In 1990, the Handy Dandy fast-food restaurant in downtown Tokyo sold crab burgers and soft-shells on a bun, made from crabs processed by the John T. Handy Co., Inc. They were very expensive in Japanese terms, costing \$4 and \$5 respectively. The company had difficulty introducing soft-shell crabs in other Asian markets, particularly to the Chinese.<sup>19</sup> At home, Handy continued to diversify and experiment with new products. They began to cryogenically freeze and vacuum pack soft crabs in plastic trays in 1990. In 1993, Handy was the first seafood company in the Mid-Atlantic area to become certified by the now mandatory FDA Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) seafood inspection program.

In 1994, the company made the transition from seafood packer to food processor with the addition of handmade crab cakes. This enabled the company to operate on a year-round, rather than a seasonal basis. The next year they added stuffed crabs and in 1998 began making salmon cakes using fresh salmon flown in from Chile and Norway. During the soft-crab season, the company works two shifts, a night shift for crab and salmon cakes and a day shift for soft-shell crabs. In order to have enough labor, Handy began hiring Mexican migrant workers under the Federal H2-B non-agricultural guest worker program in 1999, employing 16 in 2001.

Carol Haltaman was president of the National Fisheries Institute, an international trade organization in 1999-2000. In 2000, the company processed and packaged seafood with a workforce of 100 employees.<sup>20</sup> Most of the Handy products are sold in the mid-Atlantic region and can be found in grocery sections of

<sup>16</sup> Conversation with Terrence Conway, Crisfield, Maryland, December 18, 2001.

<sup>17</sup> C. Richard Cotton, "The Shell Game," *The Sun*, Baltimore, Maryland, August 10, 1988, p. 1C.

<sup>18</sup> Liz Holland, "John T. Handy Co. Expands Seafood Operation to N. J.," *The Daily Times*, Salisbury, Maryland, February 6, 1988, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> "Crabs Tokyo-Bound," *The Daily Times*, Salisbury, Maryland, October 6, 1990, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> 2000 *Maryland/DC Manufacturers Directory*, p. 368.

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Giant, Walmart, and Sam's Club. Terrence Conway bought the company back from the Taiyo Oil Co., Ltd. in 2000 after the owner died. Conway became chairman of the board of directors and Haltaman remained as president, overseeing the day-to-day operation of the company.

The Handy Company was instrumental in helping to open up a national and international market for soft-shell crabs at a time when the Chesapeake Bay was the major producer of soft crabs in the world. With a growing demand for the product and growing pressures on the mid-Atlantic crab fishery, the company is now importing soft crabs from Thailand, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, and Mexico. Imported crabs are marketed under the brand name 'Paradise Blue' to differentiate them from Chesapeake Bay crabs marketed under the 'Handy' brand.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Conversation with Terrence Conway, Crisfield, Maryland, December 18, 2001.

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**Maryland Inventory of**  
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John T. Handy Company  
7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Crisfield, Somerset County, Maryland  
Chain of title

Map 102, Parcel 121

OTB 39/161

Clara M. Hodson  
Thomas S. Hodson, City of Philadelphia

to

6/27/1904

M. Henry Douglas  
Benjamin F. Gibson  
John T. Handy

\$1,000 all that lot or parcel of land situate lying and being in the town of Crisfield...on the north side of the New York, Philadelphia, and Norfolk Railroad Company's premises and adjoining thereto and between Goodsell's Alley and the Little Annemessex River (Clara Hodson as the only child and heir of the said Sara A. Miles)

BFL 23/236

Hance Lawson

to

8/7/1879

Thomas S. Hodson

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Interview with John T. Handy, Jr., December 10, 2001.

Research file of Virginia Jenkins, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

Somerset County Land Records, various volumes, Somerset County Courthouse.

(See Footnotes for the balance of the sources consulted)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 2 acres  
Acreage of historical setting 5-10 acres  
Quadrangle name Crisfield, Maryland

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are reduced from the original size of the property. Three boundaries are coincidental with established lines with the Little Annemessex River 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

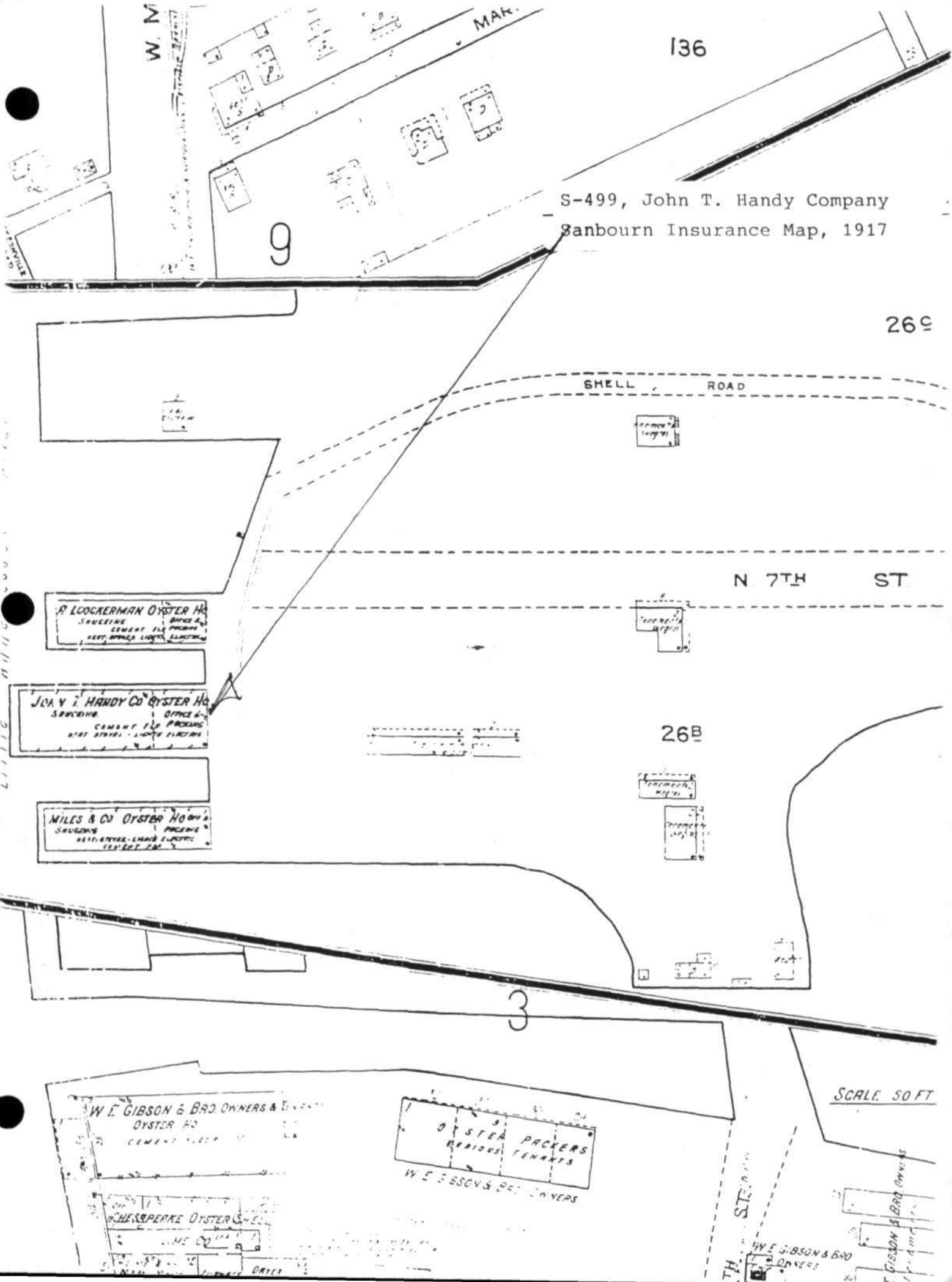
## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian and Virginia Jenkins, Business Historian, CBMM		
organization	Private Consultants	date	10/15/2001
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600



136

S-499, John T. Handy Company  
Sanbourn Insurance Map, 1917

26C

SHELL ROAD

N 7TH ST

26B

3

SCALE 50 FT

W

MAK.

9

A LOCKERMAN OYSTER HO  
SHUCKING  
CEMENT FLS PACKING  
BEST OYSTER LIGHTS SHUCKING

JOHN T. HANDY CO OYSTER HO  
SHUCKING  
CEMENT FLS PACKING  
BEST OYSTER LIGHTS SHUCKING

MILES & CO OYSTER HO  
SHUCKING  
CEMENT FLS PACKING  
BEST OYSTER LIGHTS SHUCKING

W E GIBSON & BRO OWNERS & TENANTS  
OYSTER HO  
CEMENT FLS PACKING

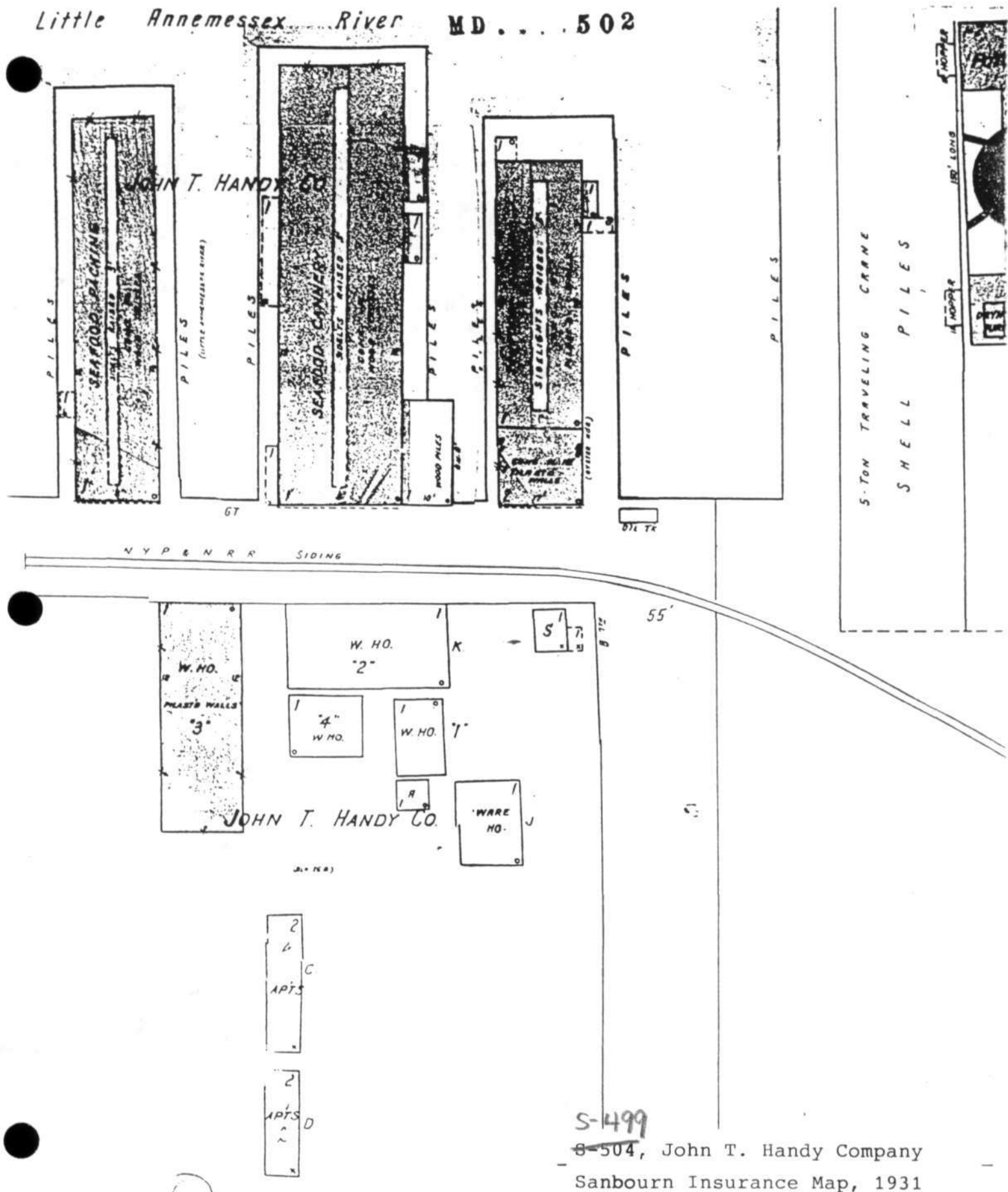
OYSTER PACKERS  
RENTS TENANTS  
W E GIBSON & BRO OWNERS

CHESAPEAKE OYSTER CO  
LINE CO

W E GIBSON & BRO OWNERS

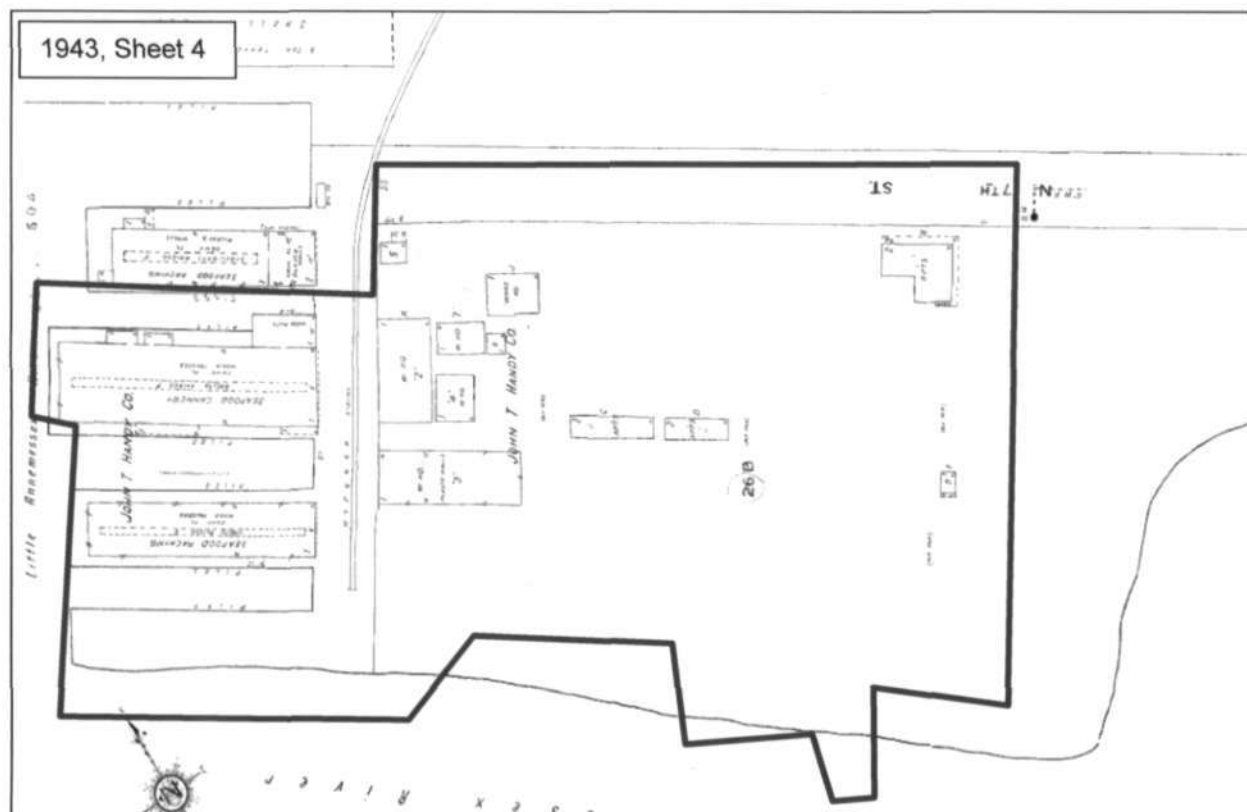
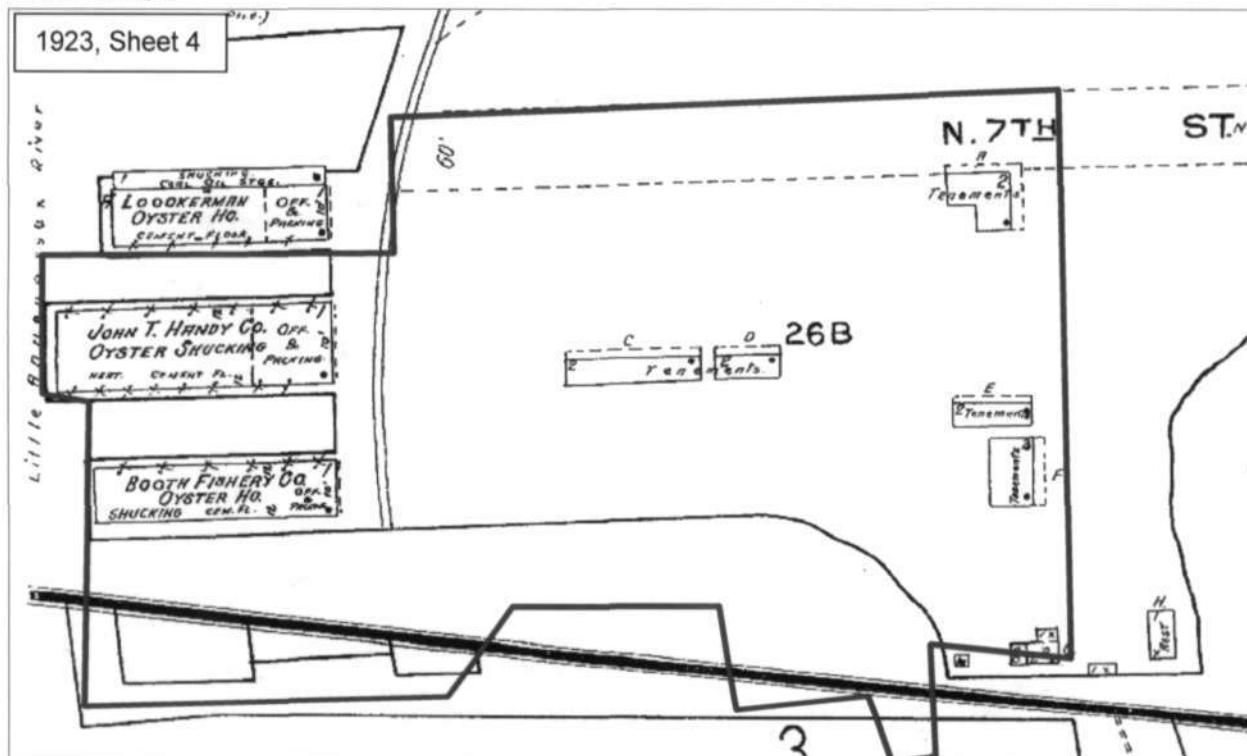
W E GIBSON & BRO OWNERS





S-499

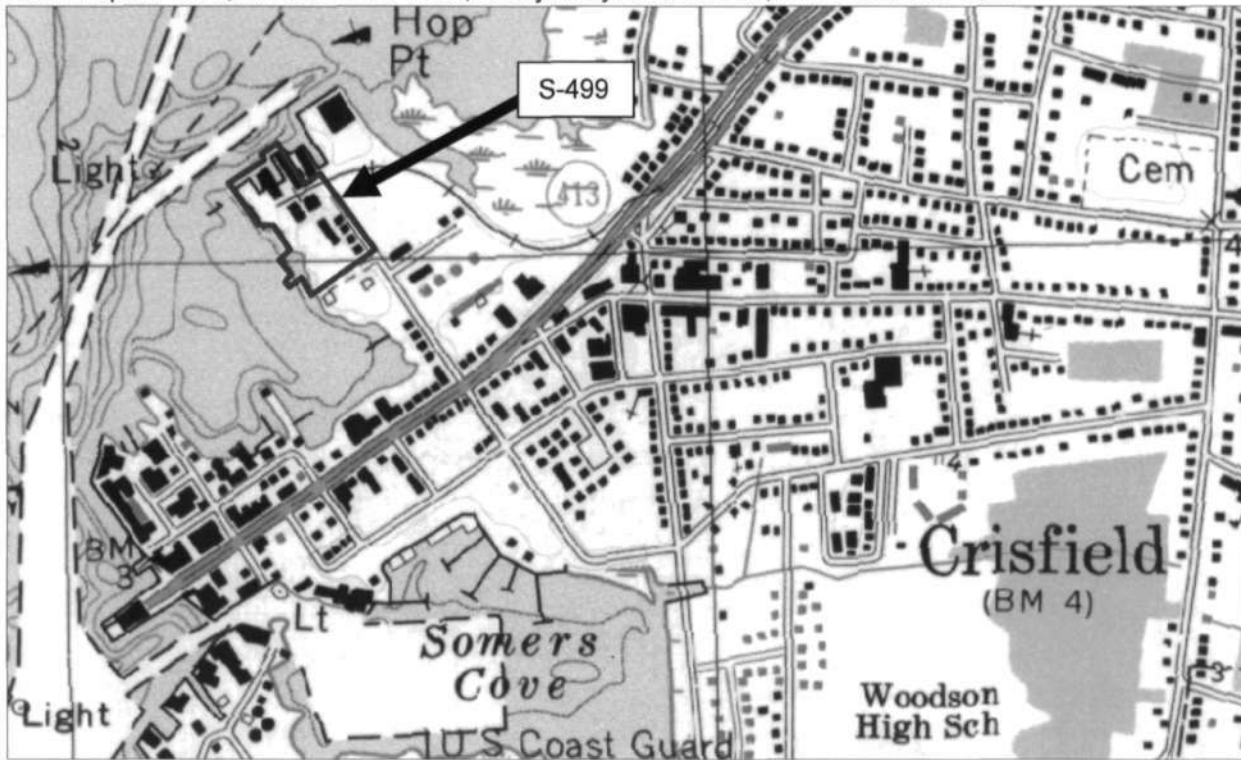
John T. Handy Company (Handy Seafood Company)  
Sanborn Maps



S-499

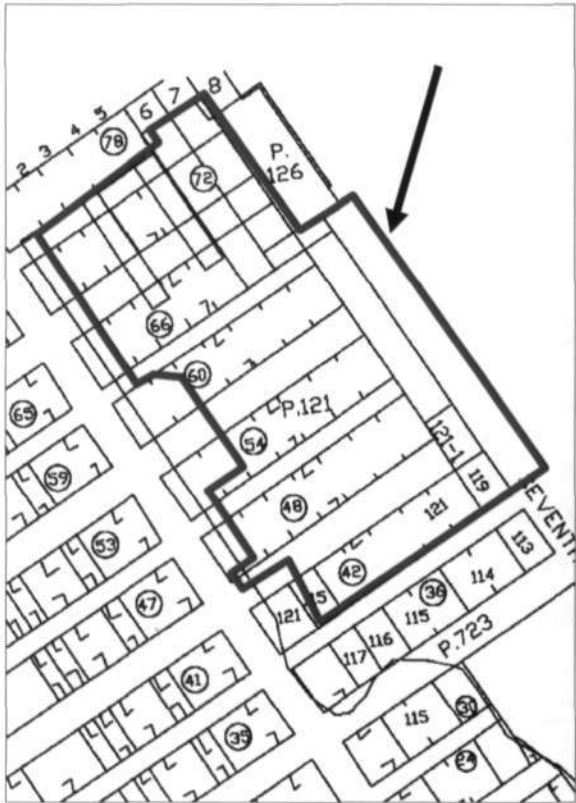
John T. Handy Company (Handy Seafood Company)

Crisfield quad 1968, Photorevised 1980, Bathymetry Added 1986, Minor revision 1992



Tax Map 102, p. 121

National Web Map Service 6" Orthophoto Map, c. 2010



5°52'30"

424000m E

2 760 000 FEET (VA) 425

426

50'

104

1704

1703

1702

1701

1700

1699

1698

1697

1696

1695

1694

1693

1692

1691

1690

1689

1688

1687

1686

1685

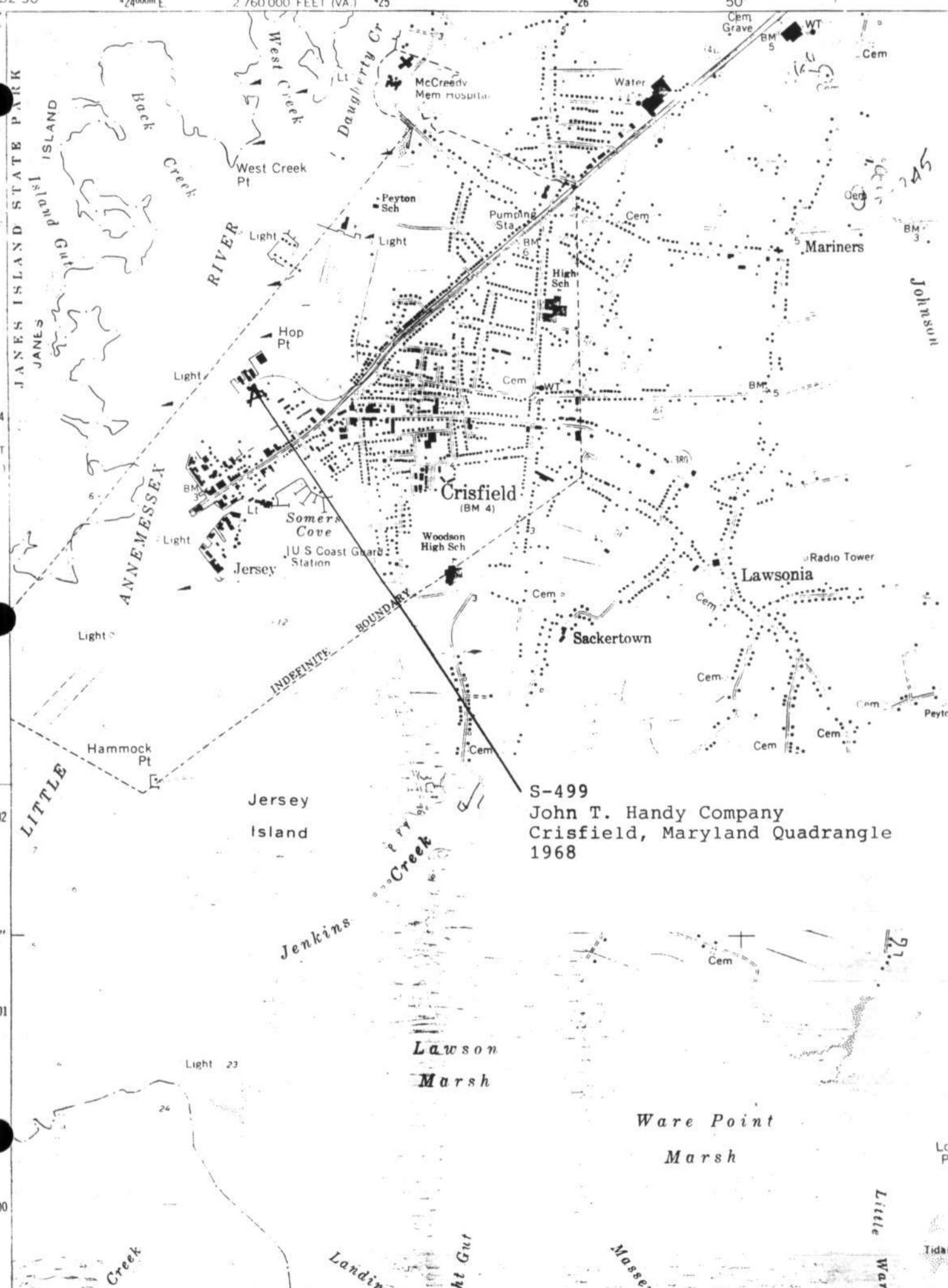
1684

1683

1682

1681

1680



S-499  
John T. Handy Company  
Crisfield, Maryland Quadrangle  
1968



S-499

John T. Haney Company  
CRISFIELD, SOMERSET CO., MD.

SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

10/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER  
WFB/MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

1 OF 10



S-499

JOHN T. HANLEY COMPANY  
CRISFIELD, SOMERSET CO., MD.

SOUTHWEST ELEVATION OF POOL BUILDING  
10/2001, PAUL TOWNE, PHOTOGRAPHED  
NEZ./MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

2 OF 10



S-499

JOHN T. HARDY COMPANY  
CRISFIELD, SUMMERS CO., MD.  
SOFT CRAB SITTING BUILDING  
10/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHIC  
MGR./ MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

3 x 10



S-499

John T. Hardy Company  
CRISTFIELD, SOMERSET Co., MD

SOFT CRABS SITTING BUILDING

10/2001, PAUL TOWNSEND, PITOTOWN APPEAL

NEX/MD HISTORICAL TRUST

4 or 10



S-499

JOHN T. HARRY COMPANY  
CRISFIELD, SOMERSET CO., MD.

SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

10/2001, PAUL TOCHART, PHOTOGRAPHY

NELSON / WITH HISTORICAL TRUST

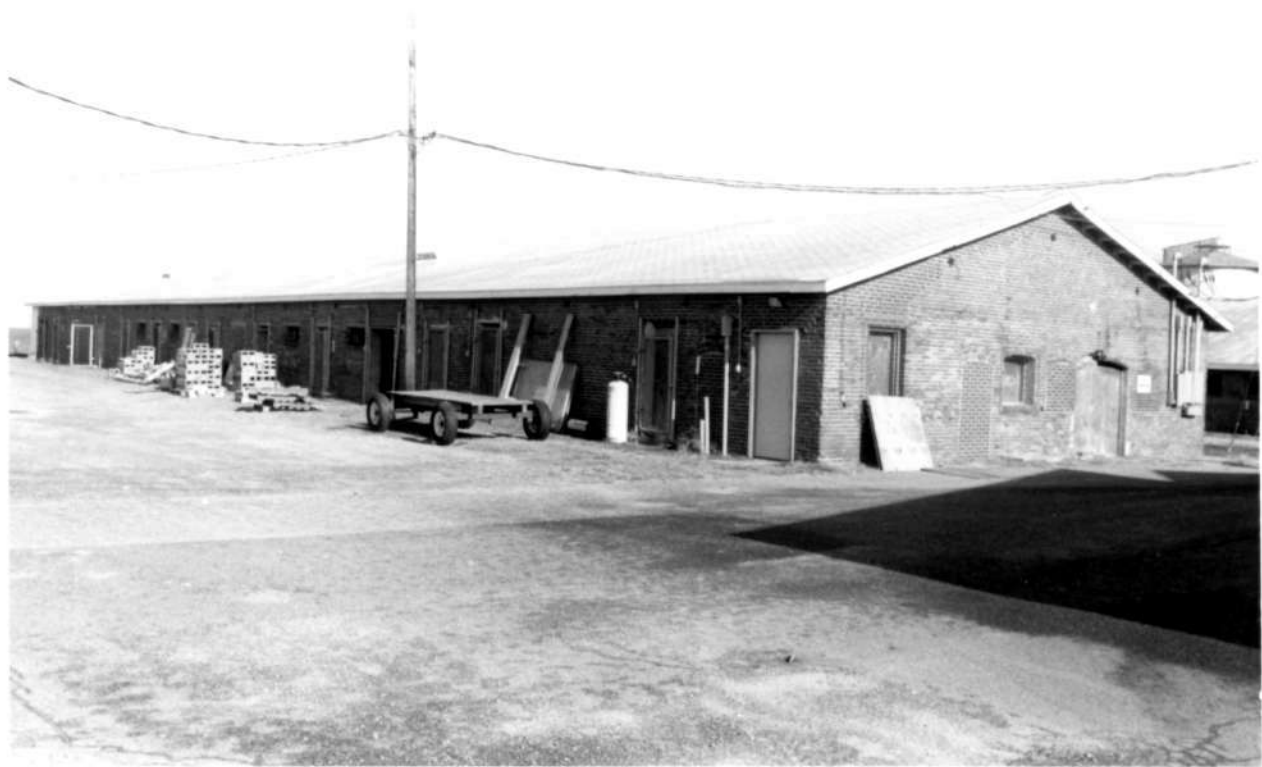
5 OF 10



S-499

John T. Hanny Company  
CRISFIELD, SOMERSET Co., MD.

NORTHEAST ELEVATION of PICKING HOUSE  
10/200, PAUL TOWNSET, PHOTOGRAPHER  
NEG./ MD. HISTORICAL TRUST  
6 of 10



S-499

JOHN T. HARDY COMPANY  
CRISFIELD, SOMERSET Co., MD.

SOUTHWEST ELEVATION OF PACE HINGHOUSE  
10/2001, PACE TOWER, PACE HINGHOUSE  
NEB./MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

7 OF 10



S-499

John T. Hanny Company

CRISTFIELD, SOMERSET Co., MD.

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

10/2001, Paul Towant, photographer

NEZ/MD HISTORICAL TRUST

8 OF 10



S-499

JOHN T. HADY COMPANY

CRISFIELD, SOMERSET CO., MD.

NORTHEAST ELEVATION OF PACKING HOUSE

10/2001, PAUL TOURANT, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEG./MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

9 OF 10



S-499

John T. Harlow Company  
CRISTINA, Somerset Co., MD  
Southwest corner of Dock Street Bldg.

10/2001, Paul Tourant, PHOTOGRAPHER  
NEA. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

10 of 10